



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

REBECCA A. HUMPHRIES  
DIRECTOR

RESUBMITTED: March 14, 2005  
April 11, 2005

Memorandum to the Natural Resources Commission:

SUBJECT: Deer Hunting Regulations

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

The Department is committed to managing the white-tailed deer population in balance with its habitat to yield healthy fawns, does, and bucks. Management is based upon the biology of deer, habitat quality, interaction with other species, and social issues. Proposed changes in regulations in this order eliminate the early firearm antlerless deer season in southern Menominee County and in the Special Regulation Units (SRU) of Alcona, Alpena, Crawford, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, and Presque Isle Counties; add 11 southern Michigan counties to the late antlerless firearm season; add seven days to the muzzleloader season in Zone 3; close the deer season on January 1; and modify the deer season dates for North Manitou Island.

The deer population in southern Menominee County (DMU 055) has been estimated to be at or near goal. The early firearm antlerless deer season has declined in both hunting effort and in the number of antlerless deer harvested in the last few years, however the overall antlerless harvest in the DMU has remained strong. In addition, requests for Deer Damage Control Permits have declined 20 percent from 2003. The same overall level of antlerless harvest can be achieved without the early firearm antlerless season during the archery, firearm, and muzzleloader seasons. The Department recommends the early firearm antlerless deer season be discontinued in DMU 055.

Within SRU's the antlerless harvest during the early firearm antlerless deer season has declined to less than half of the 1998 harvest and hunter participation has declined to less than a third of the 1998 level. The same overall level of antlerless harvest can be achieved without this season during the archery, firearm, and muzzleloader seasons. The Department recommends the early firearm antlerless deer season be discontinued in the SRU's.

The late antlerless firearm season has helped target specific deer populations on private land. Only a person possessing a valid antlerless deer license issued for a DMU open to this season may take a deer during this season. The Department recommends the late antlerless firearm season remain open in the

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seven-county Special Regulation Units. Deer populations in certain areas in Zone 3 are significantly over established goals. Twelve counties (Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Hillsdale, Ionia, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Lenawee, St. Joseph, and Tuscola) substantially over goal were open to the late antlerless season in 2003 and 2004. Wildlife Management Unit Supervisors (MUS) recommended additional DMU's for inclusion in the late firearm antlerless season for 2005. The percent over goal for each of the recommended DMU's was averaged for 2001 through 2004. The twelve counties open for the late antlerless firearm deer season in 2003 and 2004 all averaged 37 percent or more over goal. The counties of Allegan, Cass, Isabella, Mecosta, Midland, Oakland, Ottawa, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Van Buren, and Washtenaw averaged at least 30 percent over goal. The Department recommends the late antlerless deer season on private lands in southern Michigan be the twelve counties open in 2004 and the eleven counties listed in this option.

The deer herd in Zone 3 (Southern Lower Peninsula) is over goal. The Zone 3 deer harvest has represented over 50% of the statewide deer harvest the last three years. Over 100,000 hunters annually participate in the Zone 3 muzzleloader season. Traditionally, antlerless deer represent 2/3 to 3/4 of the muzzleloader harvest. The Zone 3 muzzleloader season antlerless harvest in 2003 was 50 percent larger than the antlerless harvest in 2002. Expanding the muzzleloader season in Zone 3 will provide additional recreational opportunities resulting in additional antlerless harvest. The Department is recommending expanding the muzzleloader season in Zone 3, starting the muzzleloader season the first Friday in December and continuing for 17 consecutive days.

Traditionally the deer season closed on January 1. The 2004 deer season was extended to include Sunday, January 2, 2005 allowing hunting throughout the New Year's holiday. In 2006, January 1 is Sunday and January 1 will fall on a weekday until 2011. The Department recommends the archery deer season and late antlerless deer season be closed on January 1.

North Manitou Island is owned by the National Park Service (NPS) and is part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Special season dates are designed to accommodate access to the island and meet the NPS goal of maintaining a small deer herd on the island. During late October and early November the ferry providing service to the Island only runs on Sundays. The ferry stops operation in mid-November. The Department recommends modifying the dates for the deer seasons on North Manitou Island.

Recommendation:

This order is being submitted for information and consideration. It will be submitted for final action in May 2005.

William E. Moritz, Chief  
Wildlife Division

Alan Marble, Chief  
Law Enforcement Division

Arminda S. Koch,  
Resource Management Deputy

Dennis Fedewa  
Chief Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries  
Director

# **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER**

## **Amendment No. 5 of 2005**

Under the authority of sections 40107 and 40113a, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, being sections 324.40107 and 324.40113a of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources ordered that effective May 6, 2004, the following sections of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

### **3.101 Deer hunting, open seasons; type of deer that may be taken; carrying of firearms; season limit.**

Sec. 3.101. (1) The open firearm deer season shall be from November 15 to November 30.

(2) The open muzzle-loading and black-powder firearms only deer season in zone 1 shall be a total of 10 days from the first Friday in December to nine days thereafter. The open muzzle-loading and black-powder firearms only deer season in zone 2 shall be a total of 10 days from the second Friday in December to 9 days thereafter. The open muzzle-loading and black-powder firearms only deer season in zone 3 shall be a total of 17 days from the first Friday in December to 16 days thereafter.

(3) Subject to section 43510, subsections (2) and (3), of Part 435, as amended, hunting and fishing licensing, MCL 324.43510, a person hunting deer with a muzzleloading firearm during the muzzle-loading and black-powder firearms only season shall only possess or carry afield, or take a deer with a muzzle-loading rifle, muzzle-loading shotgun, or black-powder pistol, loaded with black-powder or a commercially manufactured black-powder substitute.

(4) The open bow and arrow only season shall be from October 1 through November 14 and from December 1 through January 1.

(5) Subject to section 43510, subsections (2) and (3), of Part 435, as amended, hunting and fishing licensing, MCL 324.43510, during the open bow and arrow only season, a person hunting deer with a bow and arrow shall not possess or carry afield a pistol, revolver, or any other firearm unless the person is properly licensed to hunt deer with a firearm and is hunting in an area open to firearm deer hunting.

(6) The late antlerless firearm deer season shall be from the first Monday following the third Saturday in December through January 1 upon privately owned lands within Alcona, Allegan, Alpena, Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Crawford, Hillsdale, Ionia, Isabella, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Lenawee, Mecosta, Midland, Montmorency, Oakland, Oscoda, Otsego, Ottawa, Presque Isle, St. Joseph, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola, Van Buren and Washtenaw counties. Only a person possessing a valid antlerless deer license issued for the deer management unit in which they are hunting may take a deer during these seasons.

(7) The deer management assistance firearm hunt period shall be from the first Monday following the third Saturday in December through January 1 upon lands owned by federal, state, county, or local units of government, non-profit organizations, and other urban or suburban properties in zone 3. Only those areas with a wildlife division approved deer population management plan will be considered for issuance of these special deer management assistance permits. Only a person possessing a valid deer management assistance permit issued for this hunt period may take a deer with a firearm during this season.

(8) The season limit shall be 1 deer per firearm deer license, one deer per bow and arrow deer license, one deer per tag issued with a combination deer license, plus one deer per antlerless deer license.

(9) Except as provided by sections 3.101c and 3.101d, the kind of deer which may be taken during the respective open seasons for each combination of season and deer license type shall be as follows:

<u>Type of license</u>	<u>Season in which used</u>	<u>Kind of deer that may be taken</u>
Bow and arrow deer license	Bow and arrow only seasons.	Antlerless or antlered deer, except if a person takes 2 antlered deer all seasons combined, one of the

Firearm deer license	Firearm deer season, muzzle-loading and black-powder firearms only season. Youth firearm deer hunting days	antlered deer must have at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length. Antlered deer, except if a person takes 2 antlered deer all seasons combined, one of the antlered deer must have at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length.
Combination deer license – Regular	Bow and arrow only seasons	Antlerless or antlered deer
Combination deer license – Regular	Firearm deer season or muzzle-loading and black-powder firearms only season Youth firearm deer hunting days	Antlered deer
Combination deer license – Restricted	Bow and arrow only seasons	Antlerless deer or a deer which has at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length
Combination deer license – Restricted	Firearm deer season or muzzle-loading and black-powder firearms only season Youth firearm deer hunting days	A deer which has at least 1 antler with 4 or more antler points 1 or more inches in length

(10) A person issued a permit by the department to hunt from a standing vehicle may take deer with a firearm during a two-day hunt starting the third Saturday in October upon privately owned lands. Except as already provided in section 40114, part 401, wildlife conservation, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, being section 324.40114 of the Michigan Compiled Laws, regarding the taking of a deer of either sex, all regulations of state law and this order regarding the taking, possession, transportation, and storage of deer during a firearm deer season shall apply to a person participating in this season.

**3.110 North Manitou Island deer management unit, deer hunting seasons.**

Sec. 3.110. (1) The open bow and arrow only deer hunting season shall be from October 1 through the third Sunday of October within the North Manitou Island deer management unit.

(2) The open muzzle-loading and black-powder firearm season shall be from the first Monday following the third Sunday of October through the fourth Sunday of October within the North Manitou Island deer management unit.

(3) The open firearm deer hunting season shall be a total of 15 days from the Forth Sunday of October to 14 days thereafter within the North Manitou Island deer management unit.

Issued this 5<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2005.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Keith J. Charters, Chairman  
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries  
Director